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LEGISLATIVE LIBRARIES AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Papers prepared by members of the IFLA Parliamentary Libraries Section

Edited with an Introduction

BY

DERMOT ENGLEFIELD

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FOREWORD

On behalf of the Joint Committee on the Library, we are pleased to present this compilation of papers entitled *Legislative Libraries and Developing Countries.* It is the hope of the Committee that this publication can be of valuable assistance to the legislative bodies of developing countries as these bodies establish information and research systems for their respective parliaments. An ever-increasing need exists today for lawmaking bodies to create and maintain adequate information resources in order to confront complex issues and make informed, well reasoned decisions. As the Honorable Gilbert Gude, former Director of the Congressional Research Service, has pointed out, CRS and the Library of Congress have played host to over 1000 delegates from foreign legislatures during the past five years who are seeking to improve their own legislative support services. CRS and the Joint Library Committee remain committed to offering advice and assistance in this area based on their own experiences in providing information resources to the American Congress. In the words of Mr. Gude, with that commitment we can achieve a means for "enhancing the quality of legislative deliberation and debate in the nations of the world."

FRANK ANNUNZIO,
Chairman.

CHARLES MCC. MATHIAS, JR.,
Vice Chairman.

Introduction

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) was founded in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 30th September 1927. Today it has over 1,130 members in 120 countries and its headquarters are at The Hague in the Netherlands. A little over one-third of its membership is in countries in the Third World and its purpose is 'to promote international co-operation, discussion and research in all fields of library activity'. To cover these 'fields of library activity', IFLA's work is organised in eight Divisions which are themselves divided into 31 Sections. Division one is called the General Research Libraries Division and the third of its three Sections is the Parliamentary Libraries Section.

IFLA works on a basis of five year plans, termed Medium-Term Programmes, which are drawn up by the Sections themselves. The Parliamentary Libraries Section Medium-Term Programme 1981–85 included the following aspirations:

1. To assist in the development of parliamentary libraries with special reference to developing countries, and
2. To strengthen co-operation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and parliamentary libraries.

Work is done primarily through the annual meetings of the Parliamentary Libraries Section at the IFLA annual conferences which are held at different places throughout the world.

At the 1983 meeting in Munich, in connection with point one above, it was decided to concentrate on this aspect of work at the 1984 meeting in Nairobi, which was the first meeting to be held in Africa. Also at Munich in 1983 in connection with point 2 above, Dr Subhash Kashyap, then head of the International Centre for Parliamentary Documentation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, read a paper: 'The role of inter-parliamentary co-operation and the International Centre for Parliamentary Documentation (CIDP) in strengthening parliamentary institutions through documentation and dissemination of information'.

At the meeting in Naibrobi in 1983 the following papers were contributed: 'Materials for the smaller Legislative Library' by R Mwale (Zambia), 'The development of Parliamentary Libraries and Information Services in the South West Pacific' by J Brudenall (Australia) and 'The Parliamentary Library and the Parliamentary Information System: Tasks and Problems' by W Dietz (Federal Republic of Germany).

The theme of these papers was to exchange advice and ideas which might be especially useful to countries which were likely to need to establish or to improve their parliamentary information services. Following the presentation of these 1984 papers, the Parliamentary Libraries Section decided to commission two other papers, the first on 'The Legislators' need for information and research' by G Gude (USA) and the second on 'The Technical Co-op-

eration Programme of the Inter-Parliamentary Union' by P Dawe (Geneva, Switzerland), in order to round out a pamphlet which it is hoped may be of assistance to parliaments which considering the "information" aspect of their services for the legislature.

This pamphlet is not addressed simply to parliamentary librarians and research staff. While some of the papers were originally delivered to an audience of professional librarians, the latter are very conscious of their other vital role, namely that of being permanent officers of the legislature. And it is hoped therefore that senior officers of parliaments, those who are responsible for major policy proposals regarding the organisation of services for their parliaments and indeed members of parliaments themselves will consider the points made in these papers. It is of course not surprising that those working in parliamentary libraries should feel themselves part both of the world of their parliament and also of the world outside, because the task of library and research services is not only to keep tabs on the work of their own parliament but also to tap information from external sources on behalf of their members. This contrasts for the most part with other parliamentary staff who are concentrating on the internal working of parliament, its procedure and proceedings, its security and accommodation, etc. This dual role and responsibility makes work in a parliamentary library—together with the need for speed and accuracy and the exposed nature of information given to legislators—an exacting one.

The first paper by Mr Gude sets the scene on 'the need for information and research' and it is especially appropriate that it should come from his pen as Mr Gude has been a member of the legislatures in the United States both at State and Congressional level. He pinpoints the variety in the background of legislators and hence their very real need for information and research support. The second paper from Mr Mwale has an equally authentic ring namely the very real problems and needs of a small legislative library situated in Africa. His suggestions with regard to help are very similar to some of the points made in the later paper about the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva. And the priorities in the service that he organises for members, namely that it should be impartial, accurate and presented on time and in a form the member can use, are just the same as the priorities for large, sophisticated legislative services. The third paper by Mr Brudenall is an interesting account of the first practical steps taken in the South West Pacific by a developed parliamentary library, that of the Commonwealth of Australia in Canberra, to help the parliamentary libraries of a widely scattered group of developing countries. The paper of Mr Dietz reminds those responsible for planning and building up parliamentary information services to ask themselves a number of fundamental questions. Where should the library fit into the parliamentary service as a whole and what should be the status of the librarian? He warns against scattered information services within parliaments, shows that, in the interest of efficiency and thus economy, the relationship between library and research services should be carefully considered and considers the important role of a presiding officer and a library committee. And he reminds us at a time when computer applications in parliamentary libraries are

multiplying that it is the information providers who must be considered first in these matters and that this expensive new tool is appropriate only when library staff are sure that traditional and far less expensive methods cannot answer the enquiry. The final paper by Mr Peter Dawe gives an interesting outline of the practical steps the Inter-Parliamentary Union has taken to offer assistance to the staff of parliaments, especially in terms of training and especially the staff concerned with library and information work.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is not the only organisation, however, which has contributed to these needs of developing countries. As Mr Gude says, the Congressional Research Service is a great learning centre for the staff of legislatures and is visited by a growing number of such staff, and the Canadian Parliamentary Library at Ottawa has welcomed many, especially from countries in the Caribbean and also, for instance, Korea. (The Canadian Parliamentary Librarian himself contributed to a major UNESCO sponsored meeting on the subject of Parliamentary Libraries held in Nigeria in 1982.) The Quebec National Assembly has helped among others the staff of parliaments of French speaking countries in Africa and the United Kingdom has welcomed officials, especially those from the Commonwealth, who are invited on attachment to exchange ideas and to learn from the experience at Westminster. The Parliament of the German Federal Republic at Bonn has helped the parliaments of developing countries likewise, including offering support in building up the collection of some libraries by sending them books which they need.

Since the Second World War and especially during the last fifteen to twenty years the importance of significant library and information services for legislators has become very clear. As the job of being a legislator has become more full-time and exacting, as the transmission of global information has become instantaneous, the need to filter and organise this data impartialy has become ever more important for politicians. While this has achieved growing recognition in industrial democracies' *Legislative Libraries and Developing Countries* is designed especially to alert developing countries to this need which they should take account of when planning the services of their legislatures.

I would like to thank the contributors and especially Mr Gude through whose support the Joint Committee on the Library of the United States Congress kindly made this publication possible.

DERMOT ENGLEFIELD,
Chairman of the IFLA
Parliamentary Libraries Section, 1985–87.

"THE LEGISLATOR'S NEED FOR INFORMATION AND RESEARCH"

(By Gilbert Gude, Director of the Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington)

The members of elected lawmaking bodies—assemblies, congresses, parliaments—in most countries come from a variety of occupations and professions. This diversification is a widely accepted characteristic of the "citizen-legislative" body; and it is one major reason for the significant need of the members for information and reearch. Some citizen-legislators have served as administrative officials or have experience in other public office, that, in part, prepares them for their legislative duties. All new members, however, when they begin their legislative tasks, must analyse complex issues and make decisions on many unfamiliar subject areas and problems.

The perception of the importance of occupational diversity among legislative members is found in the law which provides for the People's Assembly of Egypt which requires that one-half of the membership must be comprised of workers or farmers. The law states that a worker must be a citizen working in industry or providing a service and that he must be dependent upon his work for his livelihood. A farmer member of the Egyptian Assembly must reside in a rural area and have agriculture as his sole occupation and source of income; he must also not own more than four hectares of land. Requirements such as these practically insure that new members will have a substantial need for acquiring information and knowledge in a number of subject areas unrelated to their occupations.[1]

Although it is not mandated by law, parliaments of other nations also exhibit a diverse range of occupations. For example, the Parliament of Zambia is comprised of more than one-fourth businessmen, about 17 percent of the members are civil servants, almost 10 percent farmers, and nearly 5 percent lawyers. In Madagascar, a significant number of Deputies to the National People's Assembly are in the educational profession, with more than one-fourth of the membership composed of teachers; civil servants comprise 17 percent, and farmers 10 percent. The Deputuies to the Turkish Parliament number 11 percent businessmen, 6 percent educators, 14 per-

[1] To the extent that formal education would be helpful to legislators in becoming knowledgeable in a variety of legislative subject areas, the Egyptian law would seem to assure that many new worker-members would assuredly benefit from parliamentary information and research assistance. The law defines in addition to other requirements that "A [worker] does not possess any diploma from a university, institute of higher education or military school. However, any person who started out in life as a worker and later obtained a university diploma but has remained affiliated to his worker's trade union is regarded as a worker, notwithstanding his having obtained such diploma." Inter-Parliamentary Union. International Centre for Parliamentary Documentation. Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments: 1 July 1983–30 June 1984, v. 18, Geneva. 1984. pp. 43–44.

cent lawyers and 15 percent general directors or public administration officials. Other Turkish deputies reflect a broad diversity of experience and training as financial advisors, trade unionists, journalists, pharmacists, engineers, importers-exporters and architects.[2]

In the United States Senate several years ago, while both Senators Proxmire and Baker disagreed on whether it was possible for Senators to serve part-time and still pursue outside occupations, they did agree that the U.S. Congress should always be comprised of a memberhip of private citizens of many viewpoints—architects, doctors, farmers, businessmen and lawyers. With such a membership, the two Senators believed that public policy issues could be addressed appropriately from the many perspectives of the private citizen.[3] If the two Senators examined the occupational composition of the Congress for the last thirty years, they would feel confident that a diversity of occupations is represented. Throughout this period businessmen, bankers, journalists, lawyers and farmers have had continued representation in both bodies.[4]

Both the range and increasing complexity of public policy subject areas and the diversity of the members' occupational backgrounds contribute to the growing need for quality information and research by legislative bodies. A 1975 House of Commons report pointed out: "Members are expected to deal . . . with the wide range of industrial, commercial, agricultural, social and other problems that arise within their constituencies."[5] This is reinforced by the expressions of the members themselves who acknowledge in various ways the importance of access to timely and accurate information services.

In Kenya, a Member of Parliament and Assistant Minister for Education despairs at the lack of information resources to support the MPs. He laments that pleas for books, publications and research material for the Library Committee are rapidly turned down: "Parliament votes for the money to be spent but can't get money for its own library."[6]

In the Middle-East Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, an MP comments that a government ministry collects "information and statistics [To present in support of its position] and the Member [without research support] just stands there." Another Member of the Jorda-

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[2] Inter-Parliamentary Union. International Centre for Parliamentary Documentation. Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments: 1 July 1983–30 June 1984, v. 18, Geneva, 1984. (Detailed analyses of legislative elections are presented in tabular form throughout the work.)

[3] Congressional Record, Daily Edition, v. 129, June 14, 1983: S8373–S8376 (Included in discussion of the Salary of Senators); June 16, 1983: S8508–S8510 (Included in discussion of whether Congress should be a full-time or part-time job); June 20, 1983: S8672–S8673 (Included in discussion of whether the Senate should be a part-time job); v. 130, Apr. 12, 1984: S4579–S4581 (Included in discussion of citizen legislator).

[4] Some Members of Congress in responding to American Enterprise Institute polls have listed more than one occupational area which gives some ambiguities to the percentage results. Nevertheless, even with some declines in the percentage of farming and legal professional representation in recent years, a characterization of the United States Congress as a citizen-legislative body in the context of occupational diversity is a sound one. The sources for the polls are surveys in Congressional Quarterly Almanacs, as published in Vital Statistics on Congress, 1984–1985 edition. By Norman J. Ornstein, and others. Washington, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1984. pp. 24–27.

[5] Bevens, Anthony J. Research assistance for MPs? Political quarterly, v. 47, July-Sept. 1976. p. 339. (Cites House of Commons Paper 662 of session 1974–75 (HMSO, 1975), Para. 12).

[6] Information Policy is Urged. The Daily Nation (Nairobi, Kenya), Aug. 23, 1984. p. 4.

nian Parliament relates how he has to carry out research on his own; while still another states that he found it necessary to pay private researchers to develop information which was important to his parliamentary work. These statements reflect a common concern that without adequate information resources, members cannot exercise fully their legislative authority.

Members and staffs of legislatures from all over the world have visited Washington, DC, and observed the operations of the Congressional Research Service in increasing numbers—from less than 20 in 1975 to an average of 200 a year in the last five years. They consistently express a strong interest in strengthening their own information and research support to provide improved services to their legislative bodies. In particular, they have a strong interest in the role that communication and information technology can play in enhancing the information transfer process. Interestingly, the United States Information Agency, which sponsors most of these visitors has found that its visitors from all professions indicate a similar interest in how information technology is being applied in the United States.

It was at the turn of the twentieth century that the policy making legislative bodies of the western developed nations began to direct their attention to the need for information and research support. Shortly before World War I, a British Ambassador, who was an expert in parliamentary affairs, appeared before a committee of the US Congress to testify on behalf of the establishment of a legislative reference service. He emphasized the value of gathering all information which could help in the "framing of good legislation," and pointed out the growing complexity and detail with which legislators were asked to deal.[7] Sixty years later, a commentator on the British Parliament spoke in the same vein,

> A generation ago it was enough for an MP to be 'well read' * * * but today the revolution in the social sciences which stresses the importance of quantifying and analyzing information so as to reach conclusions that are other than impressionistic is coming.[8]

The growth of the United States Congressional Research Service during the twentieth century has been an evolutionary response to the needs of Congress—growing from a library support activity to a complex information and research organization.

Senator Everett Dirksen in the fall of 1942—when Congress was considering further expansion of the Service—stated, "In order to cope intelligently with the far flung activities of the independent bureaux and agencies, we in Congress ought to bring our legislative machinery up to date."[9] His thoughtful comment illustrates the attitude of Senators and Representatives who have been most keenly interested in this area of legislative support activities. Twenty-six

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[7] US Congress. ? House. Committee on the Library. Congressional Reference Bureau. Hearings on various bills proposing the establishment of a Congressional Reference Bureau. 62nd Congress, 2nd session. Feb. 26 and 27, 1912, Washington, G1PO, 1912, p. 15.

[8] Frantzich, Stephen E. Computers in Congress; the politics of information. Volume 4 of Managing information: a series of books in organization studies and decision-making. Edited by Aaron Wildavsky, series editor. Beverley Hills, Sage Publications, 1982. p. 11.

[9] Dirksen, Everett M. Legislative Research: To Appraise Executive Activities. Washington Post, Oct. 22, 1942, p. 13.

years later another Congressman, an acknowledged leader in legislative reform—Representative Edward Bolling of Missouri, again told of the continuing pressure to keep up with the Executive branch of government:

> Congress is starved for lack of current information, properly catalogued and promptly available. This lack has led to severe frustration and a condition of legislative paranoia toward the well-supplied executive-branch agencies, bureaux, and departments.[10]

It is in this context of the legislator's need for information and research that the Parliamentary Libraries Section of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) held a seminar on the development of legislative libraries and information services at the IFLA Conference in Nairobi, Kenya in August 1984. The Parliamentary Libraries Section believed that several of the seminar papers should be available to legislatures that are working to strengthen and build their library and information services. We hope this material along with similar material from other sources, particularly from the International Centre for Parliamentary Documentation of the Inter-parliamentary Union, will form a growing resource for enhancing the quality of legislative deliberation and debate in the nations of the world.

[10]Bolling, Richard W. Power in the House. ?New York, E P Futton and Co., 1968, p. 263.

MATERIALS FOR THE SMALLER LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY

(By R Mwale, Director, Parliamentary Information and Research Library, Lusaka, Zambia)

INTRODUCTION

A smaller Legislative Assembly Library like any other Parliamentary Library of any size is established in order to serve the information needs of Members of the Legislative Assembly concerned. The primary function will be to provide a Member quickly, precisely and sufficiently detailed, any information he may require in the exercise of his duty as a representative of the people. The efficacy of the information will be judged on how soon it can be supplied and on how accurate it is. If either of these two is lost, then the Library is not serving Members efficiently.

The promptness and accuracy of information is very important to Members of Parliament who use it immediately for constructively scrutinising government policy or for shaping the mood and tone of proposed pieces of legislation. As no country can afford to plan its future in isolation, Members of Parliament, especially in developing countries, need to be up to date with the political and social trends in the world as a whole, and in particular, those countries they are close to, economically, socially and politically. Delayed information to a Member is useless because by the time it is supplied, the issue for which the information was required would already have passed through the House and the Member would already have been denied the chance to contribute. Wrong information on the other hand would lead to wrong conclusions which would in turn adversely affect Parliamentary decisions.

The efficiency and effectiveness of a small Legislative Library will depend, therefore, on the selection and organisation of its stock. The stock of a Library is dictated by two factors; the function of the Institution for which it is established and also on how much financial support it receives. Most small Legislative Libraries lack financial support so that the selection of book stock will be limited to essential materials.

LIBRARY STOCK

The most essential stock will consist of Government reports and other Government Publications including the constitution of the country; Parliamentary papers, the Standing Orders, Members Handbooks and Parliamentary debates. The documents mentioned above are very basic to the work of a Member of Parliament. These are the reports and other Government publications which give the Member knowledge of Government operations and it is from this knowledge that he is able constructively to criticise and advise the Government. A small Legislative Assembly Library will do well to

keep a complete coverage of Government reports and organise them in such a way that they should be easily accessible. There are so many ways of doing this. In our Library, Government reports and other Government publications including Parliamentary papers are housed in numbered boxes and arranged numerically. When the government reports are received, they are stamped and entered on cards found in the CARDEX. The year, volume or number of report is entered on this card. Each report has its own individual card. These cards are arranged alphabetically by their various ministry's departments (since each Government Ministry has many Deparments under it). Any change of name of a Ministry is cross referenced. The cards have numbers which correspond to those written on the boxes housing the documents. The Card Catalogue has cards bearing the same information as that found in the CARDEX but with more detailed information on each government report.

For retrieval purposes, one could use either the Card Catalogue or the CARDEX where one gets the box number, then goes to the particular box and obtains the required report. If the report does not show in the CARDEX or the Card Catelogue, this means that it has or has not been received by the library. Contact with the Parliamentary Journal Office or the relevant Ministry is then made, to ascertain whether it was published, received or maybe not yet "laid" on the Table of the House.

Members of Parliament are very sensitive to public opinion and they therefor use newspapers very extensively to judge the reaction of the people to their contributions. Newspapers are not only a means for gauging public opinion but are also a source of current information. Members use newspapers to disseminate their contributions both in the House and at meetings in their constituencies. To enable them to check what has been written in the newspapers we offer them a press clipping service arranged by subject for easy reference. We also index by name of a Member, whatever is reported in the local press by the Member or about him. This service is very popular with Members, and smaller Libraries would do well to introduce this service. I have found also, that acquisition of Paliamentary debates from the more established Parliaments is useful in that it helps to resolve some of the complicated situations by making comparisons with what happens in the older Parliaments. I find it also useful to have at any time a current copy of Standing Orders, sometimes referred to as Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business.

The second area of importance for a smaller Legislative Library is the acquisition of a good selection of reference materials, and a good amount of the budget will be spent on material which will supply up to date information quickly and factually. The basic reference collection will include encyclopaedias, subject dictionaries, bibliographies, biographies, maps and publications which give brief surveys of countries like the Statesman's Year Book, Whitaker's Almanack, Commonwealth Year Books and many others.

In Zambia, the Parliamentary Information and Research Library has been trying to build up a reference collection oriented to suit the needs and demands of Parliamentary work. Because financial

support is limited, a lot of time is spent on deciding what to purchase and what not to purchase.

The General collection of a Legislative Assembly Library will also reflect the needs and demands of a Legislative Assembly judged by the type of requests the Library receives from Members of Parliament. A deliberate emphasis will however be on the selection of books, journals, monographs and other documents depicting the historical, political, economic and social growth of the country concerned. These will give a member some ideas of what course the country has gone through, what it has achieved and what is left to be done. In this way, the Library will help a member, through reading, to advise government on what measures it should take for the continued growth of the country. I take it that small Legislative Assembly Libraries are mainly a feature of developing countries and that the emphasis in these countries is on development. The Libraries will therefore build their stocks to satisfy this need. Here again what is acquired will depend on the amount of financial support the library receives from the Government. Libraries with small budgets will find book selection a painful exercise because balancing the subject content of the Library stock evenly will be very difficult indeed.

Small Legislative Libraries in developing countries face many problems in their endeavour to satisfy the Information needs of Members of Parliament. Books and periodicals take a long time to be received after orders, and Members cannot wait for such a long time which in some cases may be as long as three months. In recent years, many developing countries have suffered from lack of foreign exchange which has meant fewer books being bought. The other setback the small Legislative Libraries face is the fact that local book shops are not well stocked to satisfy the demands of Parliamentary Libraries. These problems make acquisition of books and periodicals difficult.

The Parliamentary Information and Research Library of which I am in charge has experienced problems in acquiring reading materials at short notice because of the distance from Zambia to the source of these materials. Because of these problems and the lack of adequate finance as mentioned earlier, our Library has taken some measures to alleviate the position.

The first measure taken is that the Parliamentary Library has established very close co-operation with the other libraries within Lusaka. This library co-operation has established an inter-library loan system which I should say works very well in Lusaka. At least I find it extremely useful for procuring books and information for Members of Parliament which otherwise it would not have been possible to do by the time Members want the information. This co-operation helps the Parliamentary Library to have access to documents which it cannot afford to acquire because of its small budget or because the documents concerned are considered so specialised that they would escape the attention of a small Legislative Library whose attention is riveted in the selection of books of immediate relevance to the needs of Parliamentarians.

The other measure taken is that the Zambian Parliamentary Information and Research Library has established close contract with various Government Departments in order to learn what activities

they are involved in so that whenever a request for information is received, the relevant Ministry or Department can be requested to supply the information which we quickly pass on to the Member who needs it. This, of course, is done when the request cannot be satisfied by the resources of the Library stock.

Finally, the Parliamentary Library operates an exchange of publications programme with a number of Commonwealth Parliaments for Parliamentary papers and Government official publications. We do this through the Government Printer. We also periodically write directly to Parliaments asking them to send us required documents on an exchange basis.

The measures I have mentioned above have been intended to augment the stock of our small library. I am sure other small Legislative Libraries face similar problems as outlined above and that the measures we are taking in Zambia to supplement the Parliamentary Library stock will be taken note of by many.

I also believe that older, larger and more established Parliament Libraries can help to improve the stock of smaller Legislative Assembly Libraries by—

(1) Passing on to smaller libraries books and other documents that are received in multiple numbers as gifts, donations or by depository rights;

(2) Passing on to smaller libraries products of their research on subjects relevant to the smaller libraries; and

(3) Sending the lists of their new acquisitions to help the smaller libraries in their book selection.

The three suggestions above bring out clearly the need for greater co-operation among Parliamentary Libraries both large and small, and that this co-operation is imperative for smaller Legislative Libraries in developing countries.

I am glad to mention here that at the recent seminar of Clerks-at-the-Table and Parliamentary Officials of Commonwealth Parliaments in East, Central and Southern Africa, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, it was agreed that there should be co-operation in exchange of material. It was observed that Parliamentary Libraries have many documents which they do not need either because they have multiple copies of the same, or have no space to put them. It was agreed that lists of such material should be compiled and circulated to Parliamentary Libraries in the Region so that the other Libraries can select what they would want to keep. If this arrangement can be extended to all the Parliamentary Libraries, especially as between the smaller and the large Libraries, it would very much improve the stock of the smaller Legislative Libraries.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

(By John Brudenall, Deputy Parliamentary Librarian of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra)

BACKGROUND

The concept of the co-operative development of Parliamentary libraries was raised at the Regional Conference of Presiding Officers and Clerks held in Nauru in June 1983 and followed up with further discussion at the regional Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference held in Hobart in November, 1983.

Considerable interest in the concept was indicated at both these meetings and the first step, a survey of existing resources and information needs within the eleven participating nations, has now been concluded by officers of the Australian Parliamentary Library.

The purpose of this paper is to take up the common threads in the reports and to propose some long-term and practical assistance aimed at increasing the provision of information resources to each of the Parliaments. The proposals are flexible and will, within limits of available funds, be closely tied to the rate of development considered to be appropriate by each individual nation.

ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

The survey reports completed by the Australian Parliamentary Library have been sent to the Presiding Officers of the Parliaments concerned. There are variations between the Parliaments surveyed both in the size and scale of their existing information resources. However, it is possible to detect a number of elements common to all or several of the Parliaments. These include—

(a) Generally inadequate collections of reference materials and periodicals;

(b) An understandable shortage of funds with which to buy library materials and employ staff;

(c) A general scarcity of trained library staff;

(d) Lack of space to house the Parliamentary Library;

(e) Insufficient equipment with which to operate an effective modern library—e.g. typewriters, photocopying equipment, etc.;

(f) A lack of awareness on the part of a great number of Members, of the benefits of an effective Parliamentary Library and the access to information that it would bring.

THE BROAD STRATEGY

At present, the region's Parliamentary Libraries vary in size from the Parliamentary Library in Papua New Guinea (7,000 vol-

umes and a staff of 5) to several countries with few, if any, books or periodicals, and no staff. Nevertheless, most of the Parliaments are keen to see some planned development occur if this is possible.

The aim is to offer sustained practical assistance in meeting the information needs of the Members of each Parliament through co-operative programmes involving the Australian Parliament, the State Parliamentary Libraries throughout Australia and other regional information resources. The general proposal can be expressed as follows:—

THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL PARLIAMENT

First, the role of the individual Parliament itself is of fundamental importance in improving service to its Parliamentarians. This will primarily involve the provision of adequate accommodation and staff, plus the continuation of or increase in existing budgets for the Parliamentary Libraries. (What is "adequate" will vary from country to country and over time, as demands for information services increase). Without reasonable accommodation and staff, (at least a part-time staffing component), there is little that assistance from outside can achieve.

Secondly, Presiding Officers in the region should ask their Parliaments to appoint a Library Committee to persuade their Government to recognise the information needs of individual Members of Parliament so that they can more effectively represent their electors.

Thirdly, the individual Parliamentary Libraries can do useful work in making sure that two copies of all Government and Parliamentary publications are acquired: one copy for the local Parliament's own library and one for the National Library in Canberra. These second copies will thus greatly enhance the Canberra collection from which the Australian Parliamentary Library will be seeking to provide an information service to the Parliaments in this programme.

THE ROLE OF THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY

The Australian Parliament is prepared to provide assistance in three areas, namely:

Collection development
Training and
Information services

In providing these forms of assistance, the precise definition of what and how much will naturally vary between country and country.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Selected basic reference books can be purchased by the Australian Parliament and deposited in each Parliamentary Library.

In addition relevant general books might also be acquired and deposited, in part through 'duplicates and gift and exchange' activities. Some essential periodical and/or newspaper subscriptions may also be placed. As far as subscriptions are concerned it would be our expectation that the receiving Parliament would itself under-

take the payment in due course where the titles proved to be worthwhile acquisitions. Assistance also can be provided in acquisition procedures and sources and in bringing relevant materials to notice. Advice on the culling of out-of-date material from the existing collection can be offered.

TRAINING

A training course will be mounted to offer 'basic skills' training. Opportunities for advanced training at established library schools will be followed up. Work experience assignments will be arranged where appropriate and where opportunities arise.

Specialist advice can be provided as required, depending upon the availability of appropriate advisers and consultants.

INFORMATION SERVICES

Any regional Parliamentary Library will be asked to transmit to the Australian Parliamentary Library information requests it cannot adequately meet from its own resources. The request will be promptly answered maintaining strict confidentiality. We might also be able to provide explanatory material on audio cassettes to assist in the use of the information provided.

As part of the Information Services Programme it would be possible to distribute copies of briefing papers prepared for Australian use, on matters of general interest, while the preparation and distribution of current awareness bulletins of Pacific regional issues could be undertaken.

The staff involved in this programme would draw upon the extensive collections of the National Library of Australia and the Australian National University, both in Canberra, plus the subject expertise in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library itself. If the plan is adopted and put into effect, it will be necessary to review progress at regular intervals.

For instance, a report on the entire project might be submitted to each Annual Regional Meeting of Presiding Officers and Clerks, together with any recommendations for changes to the plan. This would provide an opportunity for all participating Parliaments to discuss the project as a whole and their participation in particular, because we will all want to see the plan working on a practical basis.

SUGGESTED PRIORITIES

The following priorities are proposed for the first year of the programme:

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Commence the purchase of a small number of basic reference tools and a number of periodicals for deposit in those libraries lacking such tools.

A list of recommended titles for inclusion in a Parliamentary reference collection, to be complied and circulated.

Arrangements made to place libraries on the mailing list for selected publications of the Australian Parliament, the Parliaments

of the Australian States and territories, and other bodies, including the United Nations.

TRAINING

A "basic skills' course lasting approximately 3 weeks will be mounted at a suitable centre in Australia. The course will concentrate upon simple library routines in the use of the basic reference collection, and the requirement to collect all national official documents etc. The Australian Parliamentary Library is seeking funds to meet the costs of fares and expenses.

Hopefully work experience assignments can be arranged with Parliamentary Libraries throughout Australia.

INFORMATION SERVICES

A current awareness bulletin will be compiled and distributed.

Information responses will be made upon request using Canberra's resources and specialist advice where appropriate.

'Public relations' and 'user education' materials will be prepared to assist Members to understand the potential of the library and information services available to them.

CONCLUSION

If these priorities are considered appropriate the necessary administrative arrangements will be put in train as early as possible. Discussions have been held by Australian Parliamentary Library officers with agencies within the Australian Government responsible for aid to Pacific countries, and with other organizations and individuals who can assist in making this important plan a success. If we can achieve this then the Parliaments in our region will be more effective and thus all the peoples in the many nations involved will benefit.

APPENDIX

COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY OF REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY RESOURCES

Country	*No. of Members in each Parliament*
Cook Islands	24
Fiji:	
House of Representatives	52
Senate	22
Kiribati	36
Nauru	18
Nuie	20
Papua New Guinea	109
Solomon Islands	38
Tonga	23
Tuvalu	12
Vanuatu	39
Western Samoa	47

THE PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY AND THE PARLIAMENTARY INFORMATION SYSTEM: TASKS AND PROBLEMS

(By Wolfgang Dietz, Director, Bibliothek des Deutschen Bundestages, Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany)

INTRODUCTION

When we speak today of parliamentary information systems (PARLIS), what we are considering is the result of a development which has become particularly visible in the last decade and which has been influenced chiefly by two factors. First there is the constantly expanding work load and functions which parliaments are now encountering in their role as monitors of the executive, and secondly the concomitant rise in the extent and quality of information required now by potential library users. The Parliamentary Libraries Section of IFLA has taken this development into consideration by giving priority to the development of PARLIS within its medium-term programme.[1]

When we examine the PARLIS which currently exist we note great differences between them, which are explained not only by the degree of development and the procedures of a particular democracy, but also by the actual functions of the parliamentary library and the library context within which it has its place. In other words: a parliamentary library with responsibility for the total provision of information and documentation within a parliament and which may in addition serve a national library, cannot be compared with a collection of books containing scarcely more than constantly used parliamentaria and a few collections of laws and legal commentaries, designed to meet the needs of Parliamentarians of a small country. It has consequently always been a problem for the Parliamentary Libraries Section to draw up a satisfactory programme for IFLA meetings in view of the disparities existing among its libraries.

This paper draws your attention to a few important questions and problems which are bound up with the estabishment of PARLIS.

DEFINITION

In speaking of a parliamentary information system (PARLIS) I am referring to the totality of all sections and departments of a parliament which have some responsibility for providing information and documentation derived from the most varied sorts of media. This includes the collecting as well as the analysis and indexing of material and the preparation of information in its re-

[1] Medium-term programme. 1981–1985. Comp. by the Professional Board of IFLA. The Hague 1982. S.20–21.

quired form. This comprehensive definition makes it obvious that areas are embraced which go beyond the traditional library function of collecting books alone. Indeed the whole information landscape with its manifold aspects and materials, including the exploitation of new media, is encompassed.

Such a system must, of course, be developed, since it did not exist initially in any of the parliaments which nowadays possess efficient information services. Because of the varying historical circumstances between countries there are also considerable differences in the services and parliamentary departments which were there originally; possibly there was only an archive or a small collection of books, and so on. When it has finally been recognised that the current arrangement is no longer suitable and the decision to create more efficient services has to be taken, it is important that there should always be a clear idea of what is to be expected of a developed information system, and how it should be organized.

FUNCTIONS

What is required of PARLIS depends on the scope and functioning of the individual parliament. It is essential to know whether information is to be available merely for the general briefing of members on interesting current political questions, or as the basis for committee and parliamentary party work and for work within the parliamentary departments which have been set up to service the institution's wide needs. According to the way this question is answered, will depend the means by which, and the extent to which, material is acquired, prepared and made accessible. Of further decisive importance for a small country will be the form in which a parliamentary library has itself to take over the function of a national or university library. In the latter case the nature of the library is basically changed, unfortunately frequently to the detriment of the work of the 'parliamentary library' in the narrower sense, because the particular information needs of parlimentarians can no longer be satisfactorily met. Further factors affecting the library's role are responsibilities assigned to it, such as functioning as a central depository for official publications of a country, including also responsibility for its bibliographic listing, to give just one example.

I should now like to concentrate on setting out a few problems which can be bound up with the building up of a parliamentary library which has the sole function of servicing parliament.

ORGANISATION

It is no accident that the library has always formed the nucleus of those PARLIS which are today functioning well. The library is already ideally placed and suited on the basis of its traditional function as a provider of information to third parties, and there is absolutely no reason why this function, even under today's changed conditions, should not continue.

The parliamentary support services which today in many parliaments are brought together as one special organisational unit were, of course, at the outset an undisputed part of the library and the staff were charged with processing, indexing and making accessible

the literature acquired by the library. In this way they had constant contact with the latest information and were in a position to have an influence on the form and development of the various information tools (such as the subject catalogue) which were created by the library. At the same time these officers represented the absolutely indispensable link with the daily work of the parliamentary committees and were thus able to prevent any possible errors or faulty decisions in the area of acquisition and preparation of information.

In cases where today, for whatever reasons, these parliamentary support services are organized as a separate unit apart from the library, then the danger of faulty decision-making is very great. Attention must be sharply focused on ensuring that information and co-operation flow freely between the two organs. This can happen, for example, by instructing new staff in each other's functions and by making them all aware of the library's information potential. On the other hand, staff of the library should be kept currently informed of any research and reports compiled by the parliamentary support services so that they might take appropriate action with regard to acquiring and indexing relevant publications.

It is not, however, only the parliamentary support services which have in certain cases severed themselves from the library, but also other information organs as the archives and the press documentation service. That is not all, for the list extends to organisational units with special responsibilities such as compilation of indexes of subjects and speakers for parliamentary proceedings, for responsibility for publishing official handbooks, for public relations work, control of printed papers and not least units with responsibility for links with external data banks, or for the preparation of data for input into data processing systems, etc. It is thus possible to offer a whole range of variant organisational forms with many different permutations. The recently published "Survey of Parliamentary Libraries Documentation and Information Services" edited by Dermot Englefield (issued in English, French and German by the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation), conveys a good idea of the picture.[2] Almost every European parliament has chosen its own form of organisation. Whether this has always been the best choice may be much doubted.

LIBRARY COMMITTEES

Closely connected with the form of organisation of a parliamentary library are the Library Committees, which are composed of members of all the parliamentary parties and which are often chaired by the Parliamentary Presiding Officers themselves. The head of the Parliamentary Library is sometimes a member of this Committee or may act as its secretary. Such committees provide the head of the library with an otherwise rare opportunity to speak directly with the parliamentary authorities responsible for ultimate policy and to present the concerns and problems of the library. If one succeeds in this way in convincing the parliamentar-

[2] Survey of Parliamentary Libraries Documentation and Information Services. Ed. by Dermot Englefield. European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation. Conference of Presidents of European Parliamentary Assemblies. Luxembourg 1983. VII, 63 S.

ians of the vital necessity of the function of providing parliament with relevant, responsive information services, then, as a rule, it is scarcely possible to underestimate the value of such a committee in supporting the library's work. There are Presiding Officers who are proud of their Parliamentary Library and see it as a cultural advertisement for the Parliament.

Until now there has been scarcely any attention given in the various parliamentary Standing Orders to the organisation and the functions of the library. This is an important question, because the library's status and influence within the parliamentary bureaucracy are affected. For this reason IFLA's Section for Parliamentary Libraries conducted some years ago a survey of its members covering this subject, the results of which were collated by the Parliamentary Research Service in Ottawa in a paper entitled "Legal Provisions Regulating the Libraries of National Legislatures." [3]

COLLECTION BUILDING

Collection building depends essentially on the scope and functions of the various Parliamentary information organs. That is true for the library as well as for the other constituent parts of PARLIS. Also relevant is what are the other information organs outside the parliament which can be drawn on and also how the provision of literature within a country as a whole is organised.

Parliamentary libraries need quick up-to-date information from printed materials which are usually neglected by state and university libraries. I have here in mind official publications, but also numerous publications of semi-official or non-official corporate bodies, which are not available for the most part through the book trade. These publications are rich sources of information of just the sort parliamentarians require.

If a parliamentary library has a co-operative acquisition scheme with another library, it is usually the case that the parliamentary library will have to assume responsibility for collecting the so-called "grey literature". This involves a great burden of work, which is very time-consuming and labour intensive. Russell Cope has treated this problem in more detail in an essay "Current Issues in Australia Parliamentary Library Services" which I can recommend to you.[4]

It is of little assistance in this regard if one wants to replace this necessary collecting activity by use of external data bases, because one must expect to find that the book with the needed information can be obtained only with difficulty from the library holding it. Consequently it will generally not be available within the short time that it is required. Parliamentary libraries are therefore obliged, where the information needs of a parliament are very acute, to acquire this difficult material for themselves and to index and process it for use. This is a difficult task, which has already driven many of our colleagues to desperation because of all the

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[3] Legal provisions regulating the libraries of national legislatures. Research Branch, Library of Parliament, Ottawa, Canada. Ottawa 1980. 32 S.

[4] Cope, R[ussell] L[eslie], Current issues in Australian Parliamentary Library Services. Sydney 1983. S.55–63. Aus: IATUL Proceedings. International Association of Technological University Libraries. V.15.

labour involved in acquiring this material! The librarian always has doubts as to whether the materials so acquired and processed will in fact ever be used. Such thoughts inevitably lead to the attempt to reach agreement amongst libraries for them to collect specific materials in depth so that in case of emergency these items can be called on at short notice. One particular way of doing this is by means of membership of a library network, to which libraries with special collections and subject strengths are linked and whose holdings can be looked up immediately in a central catalogue. In this connection I should like to mention a library network which is presently being developed in Bonn between the Parliament Library in its role as a central government library and the other libraries there which belong to the principal federal agencies.[5]

A further possible solution to this problem was discussed at the Munich 1983 conference of the IFLA Section for Parliamentary libraries. This solution envisages an undertaking between the parliamentary libraries to provide immediate assistance to one another whenever the need arises for the despatch of official literature (including all the parliamentaria of a country), that is, official publications which are particularly hard to acquire and—in respect of foreign official materials—which are used relatively little. Such an agreement should make it possible in most cases to forego collecting current foreign parliamentaria which will on the one hand save on the high costs of postage and handling, and on the other conserve valuable labour and the expenses involved in administering official publications. Our discussion last year was based on an investigation reported by Eva-Maija Tammekann, Parliamentary Librarian of Finland, in her paper "Need for and Use of Parliamentary Papers."[6]

In a developing country which is just setting out to establish and build up its parliamentary library, the problems appear at first somewhat simpler. But one should keep under review the possible way in which a PARLIS may develop. Even if co-operation with another library seems feasible, one should remain mindful of the special needs of a parliamentary library: the collecting and preparation of up-to-date information from sources which generally find little attention in other libraries.

ANALYSIS, INDEXING AND RETRIEVAL OF MATERIAL

Information is worthless if it is not satisfactorily accessible in both its form and contents according to the needs of its users. To do justice to this task we must have initially a precise analysis of the character of demands to be made of our service and decide accordingly what rules and principles will be followed in formal and subject analysis, indexing and retrieval.

For formal analysis and indexing one should keep as closely as possible to the international standards so as not to be later hindered in adopting externally prepared data. Adoption of externally

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[5] Kohl, Ernajt. Problems arising from the establishment of Library and Information Networks for Supreme National Authorities. Bonn [um 1982]. 9 Bl.

[6] Tammekann, Eeva-Maija. Need for and use of parliamentary papers. IFLA General Conference Munich 1983. Division: General Research Libraries. Section: Parliamentary Libraries. o.O. 1983. 6 S.

prepared data will, of course, be possible in parliamentary libraries to a more limited degree than is the case in the large comprehensive libraries. The reason for this lies in the different character of the material which has to be retrieved: i.e. official publications and other "grey literature" as well as bibliographically non-individual items taken from periodicals, year-books, etc. This material is listed, if at all, mostly with a considerable time-lag in national and other bibliographies and is therefore often too late for parliamentary libraries. In the official cataloguing codes "grey literature" and bibliographically non-individual items are given scant attention so that it is often left to the parliamentary libraries to devise for themselves, by supplementing the official codes, the procedures needed to treat this material. This has happened, for example, with the network of libraries of the principal federal government agencies in Bonn.[7]

For the best subject analysis and indexing it will mostly be necessary to develop one's own systematic subject authority or one's own list of subject headings so as to be able to offer the information in the way desired. Although there are numerous institutes and databanks in many countries, offering information specifically in the fields of political science, history, social sciences and other subjects relevant to parliaments, I have frequently found that this information in only the rarest cases actually satisfies the type of requirement made by our Parliament. One is consequently finally obliged to expend considerable time and money to search out the required data when using these external information sources. As regards the Federal German Republic, I can go so far as to say that even the analysis and indexing of information provided by the Library of the German Budestag meets only a relatively small part of the information needs of the regional Länder parliaments because their requirements have, naturally, a different emphasis.

In speaking of the character of the information demand of a parliament, this of course includes also the needs of the staff of the parliamentary support services, for they are, or should be, in the final analysis the largest user group of PARLIS. The parliamentary support services should avoid building up their own information files independent of a PARLIS and only accessible to a small circle of "initiates". Disregarding information acquired for a quite specific need or for an exceptional case, it is, in view of ever dwindling budgetary allocations, essential to offer information files and materials gathered by the parliamentary support services to a wider circle of users by means of PARLIS. This will also probably avoid duplication of effort.

It occasionally happens that where information is provided by several constituent elements making up a PARLIS, this is done

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[7] Kohl, Ernst. Regeln fur die alphabetische Katalogisierung in wissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken in der Anwendung fur Parlaments- und Behordenbibliotheken. RAK-PB. Nebst Anwendung von DIN 1505, Teil 1, fur Parlaments- und Behordenbibliotheken. Entjwurf.Stand: 30.4.1982. Bibliothek des Deutschen Bundestages. Bonn 1982. 95 Bl. =Arbeitshefte. Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Parlaments- und Behordenbibliotheken. Nr. 35. Nebst: Erganzungslieferung 1. Stand: 22.3.1983, Bonn 1983. 60 gez. Bl.

Kohl, Ernst. Beispielsammlung zur RAK-Anwendung fur Parlaments- und Behordenbibliotheken. Bibliothek des Deutschen Bundestages. Bonn 1983. II, 260 S. =Arbeitshefte. Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Parlaments- und Behordenbibliotheken. Nr. 37. Nebst: Nachtrag. Stand: 1.11.1983. Bonn 1983. 10 gez. Bl.

with the help of a series of subject catalogues. There are mostly historical reasons for this, as, for example, in the German Bundestag where the Press Documentation Section uses a subject catalogue which is not at all compatible with the terms employed in the Library's Subject Thesaurus. Both systems are different in their use of subject terms by means of which the parliamentary proceedings are accessed. This problem can be avoided when a PARLIS is established if one keeps in mind at the very outset the totality of the information organs which are to be built up in the longer term. The development of individual parts of the information network should then proceed in harmony with the overall concept. The time which one believes is saved by adopting existing indexing, analysis and retrieval systems without thoroughly checking the overall situation is often finally lost by the necessity of making essential changes which were not considered earlier.

The carefully considered decision to opt for a quite specific indexing system does not mean that all the work has been done once and for all. The points of emphasis in politics change, knowledge and research continue to develop, and new areas of research gain an importance not earlier foreseen. One must therefore ask of an indexing system designed to provide the most current information, that it reacts and adapts to the changes I have mentioned, and that it includes such flexibility within its ambit. This is best achieved by maintaining a constant watch over the effectiveness of the indexing system, by a constant exchange of views with the staffs of the parliamentary support services and other prominent user groups, as well as by an attentive scrutiny of developments in all sectors of social life. This will develop a feel for where future points of emphasis in political activity will lie. These efforts will be supported if one is constantly kept informed by the parliamentary support services and other users of PARLIS of the topics on which different groups have requested information.

It is finally very valuable and saving in time for users if they can find all the information available from a PARLIS in one location. The library with its catalogues and infrastructure designed to cater for user needs is the best location for this purpose. In particular the library catalogues should serve as the central information tool of a PARLIS and it should also list material indexed in other parts of the PARLIS.

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

Collection building and the analysis, indexing and retrieval of this material form the basis for any information and documentation service of a parliament. When they are bad they fail to satisfy user needs. This is particularly dangerous for parliamentary libraries because their potential clientele also decides at the same time what resources (equipment and staff) are to be provided for the library. If the service offered is good, then there is a readiness to provide the library with the means if needs. Nevertheless the work of parliamentary libraries is a constant balancing on the razor's edge, reconciling what they can really hope to achieve with what demands are made on them. If the library is functioning well the demands made of it will continually grow. Finally the library is ex-

pected to have on hand the required information no matter how specialised it is. Such demands are usually made of especially outstanding information and documentation services, but for users of a parliamentary library it goes without saying that they expect such services from it too. As a rule the library is not greatly helped by having bibliographic references to particular information and documentary services because it is often not possible to have the listed material available at short notice. I therefore once more emphasize that where there is no guarantee of an assured supply of literature, PARLIS is obliged to build up its own independent information resources and only offer as far as possible the information that is available in that material.

It is further very important to keep under review the quality expected of information. I have already pointed out that it is predominantly "grey literature" and items without an independent bibliographic identity which provide the latest current information that is required and far less the usual monographic literature. In my library the proportion is 2:1, that is about 70% of the literature references consist of items lacking a separate bibliographic existence or come from official materials. The remainder comes from literature which is commercially available.

The demands made on the quality of information are clearly different from those a scientist or scholar makes of his library. Members do not want detailed scientific and learned treatises, but rather information presented in the shortest and most precise summary form so as to enable them to inform themselves briefly before their next engagement on the subject which is to come up, or to prepare a speech. It is noteworthy that in my library the greatest part of all inquiries are dealt with by librarians who do not have tertiary qualifications. On the other hand analysis and indexing of material is carried out by librarians with academic qualifications. This is necessary because subject analysis must meet the needs of the parliamentary support services as well as the research staffs of the parliamentary parties. I should mention here, however, that the information and documentary activity of these last mentioned librarians is essentially different from what is done in university libraries. They are also expected to provide within the shortest period a concise, precise account of the subject matter. Only a few staff are concerned with longer-term jobs.

In a PARLIS so-called *active information* occupies a broad area. What has been just said about provision of information applies equally to it: information in brief summary form is read, anything else is immediately consigned to the wastepaper basket. In cases where extensive information is offered as in the frequently issued 'list of new additions', there should be subdivisions provided which correspond with the possible areas of interest to members and the various committees. This does not then force the members to run through long lists for which they have no time. To detail the many possible kinds of active information services for parliament, ranging from daily summary reports on business in the House, to accounts written up for press use and video recordings of current television broadcasts would take a long time and I shall therefore leave the topic with these short remarks.

DATA PROCESSING

Most large parliamentary libraries have recognised that without the use of data processing they will in the future not be in a position to fulfil their responsibilities. However the basic principle must be clearly stated that data processing fulfils a subsidiary function and that responsibility both for programming as well as test running and later implementation and development must lie with the user. If it is, for example, a question of developing for the library a system of subject analysis and retrieval based on data processing, then the responsibility for developing this should lie with the relevant library staff and not—as one unfortunately finds is occasionally the case—with the data processing section whose staff consider themselves as 'information technicians' who have the sole competence. Such a tendency has a very negative effect whenever, for example, liaison with external data banks is left solely to the ADP-specialists and is not the concern of those who have the necessary subject competence and who are capable, because of their professional training, to make exhaustive use of the full information potential of an external data base by asking the right sort of questions. Of course the prerequisite for this to be the case is a knowledge of the logic and search strategy of the data base consulted, that is, skills which must have been taught to the relevant library staff.

Practice has meanwhile shown that only a controlled use of external data bases is able to contain the often very high costs of their use. It must first be ensured that the required information cannot be produced from one's own PARLIS, before calling on an external data base. It is often only the users' ignorance which leads them to believe that they can only obtain what they want from an outside system. One can avoid such faulty situations by ensuring that making use of an external data bank is dependent on the approval of a staff member who is well versed in the whole field of information sources and who also can advise on which data bases should be consulted in case of need.

There finally remains the question as to where consultation of the data banks should actually take place. There are two solutions possible; firstly to set up terminals in the area occupied by the parliamentary support services, especially where experience shows most inquiries for specialised information in specific subject areas arise, or to set up terminals with the library staff who look after specific subject areas and of whom one may be confident that they are fully informed of the capacity of their own PARLIS and have the skill to make careful use of external data bases. In my experience the latter solution is to be preferred in every case. In no case should the consultation and use of external data banks be separated from daily practice and a precise knowledge of user needs; it should not proceed through the staff of the data processing section itself.

PERSONNEL

In my outline of the tasks of collection building and subject retrieval, indeed in my overall description of the functions of an information and documentation service, we have seen that the de-

mands made of a PARLIS are clearly distinct as regards both quantity and quality from what is required as a rule of the staff in other large general scholarly libraries. This arises form the special nature of the material whose collecting and subject accessing are considerably more labour intensive than simply limiting oneself to acquiring monographs and not undertaking any work necessary to include non-bibliographically independent items in reference and information activity. Since in most cases there are no savings achieved by drawing on other information and documentation services, parliamentary libraries must necessarily require a greater level of staff so as to carry out their functions. The greater independence and efficiency in having quickly needed information available should not be underestimated. In a developed PARLIS this is exactly the prerequisite without which a parliament cannot properly carry out its legislative tasks.

Inevitably the increased calls for effectiveness have consequences for the qualifications and pay rates of the personnel of such an information system. In a few countries this is simply reflected in the status given to the position of "parliamentary librarian" or "librarian", which is equated with that of a ministerial under-secretary or junior minister. Mostly, however, the equivalence goes no further. If we expect the many officers of the parliamentary library to carry out the full range of tasks required of them and which demand a high degree of personal commitment, then it is fully justified for them to be compensated accordingly. If there exist proper training and educational courses for the library profession we expect our staff to have completed the relevant courses with good results and we expect them to command a wide range of professional knowledge. But matters don't stop there. Our librarians should bring a special flair for detecting socio-political developments. They should anticipate possible information needs and take account of them at an early stage in their documentary work. They should possess a good degree of judgement, react with prudence and intelligence and not be afraid to make decisions. They should also have a good knowledge of available sources of information, have a knowledge of history, and have the ability to communicate in at least three languages. It was no less a person than President Senghor who, speaking at our 1977 IFLA Conference in Brussels made in his address 'La bibliothèque comme instrument majeur du dévelopement' the following demand of libraries: "Je ne suis pas sur que tous les bibliothecaires et archivistes maitrisent les trois langues de communication international qui leur seraient necessaires, sans parler du latin ni du grec".[8]

CONSIDERATIONS OF LOCATION AND SPACE

Finally I wish to say something about the physical location of the information services. Closely connected with the problem of a unified and integrated information service is the question of where such services are to be located in relation to other services of the parliament. The nearer the location is to the central activities of

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[8] Senghor, Leopold Sedar. 'La bibliothèque comme instrument majeur du dévelopement. S.48-59 *in:* Libraries for all. Papers pres. at the IFLA 50th Anniversary World Congress, Brussels 1977. Ed. by Robert Vosper, Willem R H Koops. Munchen [usw.]: Saur 1980.

the parliament, the shorter the ways are between the chambers, the committee rooms, the member's own offices and the library's own quarters and the offices of the staff of the parliamentary support services, the greater the degree of communication and the more intensive is the call on the service of a PARLIS.

In connection with the building of additional space for parliament, we in Bonn have proposed that the full range of services of our PARLIS will be offered in one central "information zone". There the user will consult the library's catalogue, the central tool of the PARLIS. He will as well be able to borrow books and periodicals there. Information will be available there on the library's collection of maps, on the parliamentary archives, on all the other specialized collections, on the archive devoted to politicians, the collection of party electoral material, and the like. He will have access to the files of the Press Documentation Section with selected articles from the most important national and international newspapers. In this area there will also be computer terminals linked to external and in-house data banks. Immediately adjacent to this area will be the offices of the library's senior staff and those of the reference staff so that they can be easily consulted by the user.

The central "information zone" is located between the Bundestag chamber, the party committee rooms and offices and the offices of the members themselves. The route to the Bundestag chamer goes past the library and the members' reading room and members can quickly obtain there any information they require. Displays of new acquisitions in the library and a display of current serials seek to stir members' interest on a continuing basis and make him aware of the possible types of information available to him. The Bundestag Library has for some years advertised itself with exhibitions of books in the lobby with the result that the Library has received much support and assistance in its work from members. We are hopeful that with the completion of the new building we will be able to achieve an even better degree of support for our work and more active assistance from members.

PRINCIPLES OF A PARLIS

Having attempted to sketch some of the tasks and problems involved in the creation of parliamentary information systems, and having tried to make clearer the role of parliamentary librarians in the narrower sense, I now finish by formulating a few guiding principles which should be considered when a PARLIS is to be developed.

The head of a parliamentary information system should as far as possible be at the same time the head of the parliamentary library as the largest and central unit in the information organisation.

The head of the parliamentary library should be a professional who is well versed in all aspects of information and documentation.

The PARLIS should be an independent entity within the parliamentary bureaucracy, function as far as practicable independently from the rest of the bureaucracy and have a full voice in the decision-making process within the bureaucracy as a whole.

The areas of responsibility and competence pertaining to the constituents of the PARLIS must be clearly defined and possible over-

lapping avoided. This applies especially to such areas as collecting materials for the archive, the library and the press documentation section.

In the interests of a uniform treatment and analysis of materials for purposes of subject retrieval, a unified system of treatment should be made a prerequisite.

Use of data processing to assist with the various tasks of administration and documentation should be the responsibility of the officer in charge of the respective section and possessing the requisite competence.

The functions required of data processing in its support role must always be unambiguously defined.

The use of external data bases should as far as possible be sanctioned by the senior officers having the requisite knowledge and training.

Before calling up external data bases it must first be determined that the required information is not available in the in-house PARLIS.

The staffing level for a PARLIS should be adequate to the tasks required of it and salary scales should be commensurate with the high demands made of them.

The information services should be so located that they are easily reached from the chambers, the committee rooms and the members' offices.

I have restricted myself to essentials in proposing these guidelines. They could be easily expanded.

THE TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

(By Peter Dawe, Head of the CIDP, IPU Geneva)

OBJECTIVES OF THE TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), through its work of promoting contacts between parliamentarians and undertaking studies of the problems facing Parliaments in various countries is, and always has been, active in the development of parliamentary institutions. However, in the 1960's the idea was put forward on several occasions in the IPU that it might be possible to take a more direct initiative in the direction of strengthening representative institutions.

Lack of financial means and adequate mechanisms prevented this idea from bearing fruit until 1971, when the Inter-Parliamentary Council approved a programme of technical co-operation aimed at assisting the Parliaments of developing countries, particularly those of recent origin, to improve their technical facilities and capabilities and thus meet the requirements of their members more effectively. Two years later the programme was initiated with a project to assist the Cameroon Parliament build up its Library and documentation service.

FUNDING FOR PROJECTS UNDER THE TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

Requests for assistance under the Union's Technical Co-operation Programme are handled on a project basis with funding from a variety of sources. Until recently, activities were funded mainly through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This source of funding however placed certain limitations on the resources available and on the kind of projects which could be undertaken. The IPU Council in March 1985 accordingly adopted a proposal for a "multi-bilateral" type of programme similar in principle to certain programmes operated by some United Nations agencies. In essence, as applied to the Union's programme, this involves the Union drawing requests for assistance to the attention of potential contributors to seek their support. The contributor may then decide whether to support a particular project or part of a project.

The multi-bilateral approach complements the UNDP source of assistance by widening the field of potential contributors to include other intergovernmental agencies, government agencies and, in particular, Parliaments. In this connection it should be noted that a major feature of the programme is the international assistance which can be offered, based on the experience of long-established Parliaments. In addition, several donors may contribute to a single

project and thereby mutually reinforce the likelihood of its success. Contributions may be in cash or in kind, and may be applied to a specific part of a project if so desired. Contributions in kind are intended to cover intangible elements such as training or expert advice, as well as gifts such as books or equipment.

In this respect the Union is deeply appreciative of the valuable contribution made by those Parliamentary Groups which offer to provide in-house training for staff from other Parliaments; which undertake expert investigative missions overseas for projects; which foster the cause of particular projects with their respective Government aid schemes; or which offer support in other ways.

It is evident that operation of the programme involves preparation of documents and considerable liaison and other work by staff of the Union. The costs of these activities are absorbed as overheads in the general running expenses of the Union. They thus represent a further contribution by all member Parliaments to the programme. The programme also involves certain contingency costs, particularly those associated with feasibility studies at the preliminary stages of a project, before any formal funding for the project is available. Such contingencies are met by a small fund in the Union's budget to cover general technical co-operation expenses.

FIELD OF APPLICATION

The programme aims at developing the infrastructure of Parliaments. Its field of application accordingly covers the strengthening of parliamentary Secretariats, through training, analysis and rationalisation of methods, as well as organisational improvement in the various support services of Parliament, particularly library and documentation and research services. The programme can also include assistance related to enlarging, renovating or equipping parliamentary premises.

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

Assistance provided under the Technical Co-operation Programme can take several forms. Sometimes it is sufficient to arrange for an expert consultative mission, or such a mission may form an essential first step to explore the situation and facilitate subsequent project planning. Sometimes on-the-spot training courses by experts may be provided, or fellowships offered for training in another Parliament and/or an appropriate educational institute. Sometimes study tours to gain needed background and experience may be more appropriate. Assistance may also be given through the provision or improvement of basic equipment or the supply of books or publications.

OPERATION OF THE PROGRAMME

A project is initiated by an approach to the Union made by a Parliament seeking some form of assistance. This initial approach may be made formally in writing or informally by telephone or discussion at a conference. From this point, a sequence of actions is necesary to carry through a typical project. These include: determi-

nation in greater detail of the extent of the technical and infrastructural needs of the Parliament requesting assistance; preparation, in consultation with the Parliament, of a written "project specification" (this activity may call for feasibility studies or on-site inspection and discussion); investigation, in co-operation with National Groups, of possible contributions from potential donors such as Parliaments, government agencies and intergovernmental agencies; contact with potential contributors to obtain firm pledges of financial support or other assistance; co-ordination of negotiations between contributors and the recipient Parliament to agree details of project timing and implementation.

The IPU Secretariat facilitates implementation of a project by acting as a go-between in organising and monitoring activities between the various parties involved. The Secretariat also ensures that project progress, with appropriate financial accounting, is reported to contributors and to the IPU's governing organs. This includes an overall evaluation on completion of a project.

SOME STATISTICS

To date the Union has received 29 requests for assistance. At one end of the spectrum are relatively simple requests such as for the provision of expert information, or help in arranging contacts for the study of various parliamentary matters. At the other end are major projects to establish facilities and train associated staff. In between are requests for study tours and in-service training in other Parliaments, or requests for particular items of equipment or for expert advisory missions on the improvement of operations.

Of the 29 requests, two are in progress (Djibouti and China) and two are at a preliminary stage awaiting further information. Nine requests have been satisfied in various ways either by completion of the project, by the Union providing the information requested or assisting to establish the required contacts, or by the Union being instrumental in bringing about the desired result. Five projects came to a standstill after the Parliament involved had been suspended. Some of these projects may eventually be re-established. The remaining 11 requests were, in the main, not followed up by the Parliaments concerned after a first response had been made by the Union to the initial request.

INFORMATION SEMINARS

The Union also provides another scheme which is relevant in the context of technical co-operation. In April 1973 the Council decided to allocate part of surplus receipts from unforeseen budget savings towards financing a complementary technical assistance scheme. Under this scheme parliamentary staff of developing countries, who were also members of their Inter-Parliamentary Group Secretariat, were to receive specialised training related mainly to the activities of the Union. Trainees from Bangladesh and Sudan attended the first course at the end of 1973.

Since then the scheme has developed into a regular information seminar for staff associated with Inter-Parliamentary Groups. It is held at the Union's headquarters over about 10 days each year. The course is sometimes offered in English and sometimes in

French. Since 1973, 100 participants have taken part from 53 diffeent Parliaments of both developing and developed countries. The next seminar in this series will be held in November 1985. The Union carries the cost of living expenses during the seminar. Travel costs are met by the participants' Parliaments.

MUTUAL SELF-HELP

The institution of Parliament, for all its shortcomings, is the best way man has yet found for ordering his affairs and providing some safeguard against tyranny, anarchy and oppression. We should accordingly cherish our representative parliamentary institutions and be alert to support and strengthen them. Parliamentary staff are, in a most immediate and enduring sense, the custodians of parliamentary tradition and the protectors and defenders of their respective representative institutions.

This is a responsibility which concerns us all and it behooves the long-established, experienced and well-endowed Parliaments to succour those which are less well-endowed. This is the fundamental idea behind the Union's Technical Co-operation Programme and much can be done with slender resources through mutual self-help and co-operation.

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